

News Release

UMC SIFE Students Named Regional Champions for Seventh Consecutive Year at Business Competition in Minneapolis

By Elizabeth Tollefson on Tuesday, April 4, 2006

CROOKSTON, MN (April 4, 2006) – University of Minnesota, Crookston (UMC) students were recognized for their outstanding efforts to improve the quality of life for the Crookston community and northwest region of Minnesota at a regional conference in Minneapolis. UMC Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE) earned SIFE Regional Champion status at the organization's annual regional conference, held this past weekend, marking the seventh consecutive year UMC's team has earned the title.

UMC's team now advances to the 2006 SIFE USA National Exposition on May 21-23 in Kansas City, Missouri, to compete against other regional champion teams from across the country.

Students traveled to Minneapolis to present their year-long program of community outreach projects to a panel of business leaders at the conference. During a 24-minute multimedia presentation, they outlined the activities they had planned and implemented. Teams were judged on the presentation, a written annual report and their portfolio of free enterprise service projects.

UMC's SIFE team also won five of the six individual topic competitions. UMC students effectively showed that their programs created economic opportunity by helping others 1) learn how to succeed as an entrepreneur and/or improve an existing business; 2) acquire the education and training needed to succeed; 3) develop financial management skills necessary to achieve financial independence; and 4) understand that long-term success and prosperity are dependent on ethical business practices. The team was also recognized for ensuring the long-term sustainability of their team and educational programs.

UMC's presentation team consisted of (alphabetically) Kelli Barnes, Scott Graupner, Justin Mushel, Theodis Powell, Sam Sele and Amanda Willger. The technology team was composed of Vichita Ounchith, Justin Petrich and Souda Rattनावong. Team supporters included Tiffany Anderson, Mark Belanger, Matt Burdick, James Gapen, Melissa Herbst, Kyle Sponholtz, Lei Sun, Nicole Switzer and Kiira Wilcox. UMC SIFE advisors included Business Department Head Susan Brorson, Business Instructor Eric Burgess, Accounts Specialist Jana Hodgson and Business Instructor Kenneth Johnson.

Burgess said he is very proud of the team accomplishment and their commitment to the community. "I have been advising the UMC SIFE team for the past six years and each year our students amaze me! Their dedication and commitment to spread the word about ethical free enterprise is truly inspiring.

"I am proud of the many meaningful projects that they have successfully implemented to improve the quality of life for the citizens of the Crookston community and the Northwest region of Minnesota. The student members of the SIFE team represent a standard of excellence in leadership, scholarship, and civic engagement which exemplifies the mission and purpose of UMC."

SIFE is a nonprofit organization that gives students the tools to learn the free enterprise system in a real working situation. SIFE challenges students on more than 800 college campuses nationwide to take what they're learning in the classroom and use their knowledge to better their communities.

The University of Minnesota, Crookston (UMC) is a four-year baccalaureate degree granting institution, celebrating 100 years of excellence in education, research, and outreach. To learn more, visit www.UMCrookston.edu.

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